Our Latest Newsletter (05/11/2018)

EQUIP chats team roles: who is who, in your team?

In this week's email, we're sharing some love for teams. By thinking about their basic components: the people.

So who sits in a team? If you're part of a functional team, here are the folks you can be sure to find. Which role is yours?

Team members: the people on the team who share their time, work and knowledge in order that projects and tests of change can actually happen.

What do they do?

- Share knowledge, ideas, and ask questions – even the "silly" ones, because they trust that no questions is silly within their team, which is a safe place for them
- They listen, and practice staying open and taking calculated risks. They support the other team members, and believe in being surprised
- They do their bit of admin, sometimes taking notes, organizing or chairing meetings, etc
- They carry out the work between the meetings: collecting data, writing reports, testing changes, engaging citizens, you name it
- They communicate and work on practice buy-in, testing ideas, hearing views, and getting support to try changes

- They know that the buck stops with them: they do the work, and know that sometimes they might be only people to test a change before sharing it more widely – they know this is OK

Team leaders: they organize your meetings, keep records, and most importantly, they are the most important key to good communication and sharing.

What do they do?

- They make sure they fully understand the QI evidence based methodology their team will be following
- They are the main contact person for the team: if in doubt, ask them! *They totally check and read and answer their emails*
- They sort comms: between the team, with the wider practice, on meeting agendas – the team leader has a finger in however many pies it needs to, in order to generate sustainable buzz
- They meet with the Sponsor and keep him/her in the loop
- They make sure that the hard stuff – data, graphs, minutes or action notes, etc – is all being tracked, and consistently saved
- They make sure they do not stifle conversations and innovation – so they talk only as much as actually needed!
- They hold leadership (which is very different from management) and credibility – and they hold this by sharing the work between meetings with the team members, rolling up their sleeves and getting stuck in
- They support the team, and make sure that problems feel framed as they are: about the system, and not about the people

Coaches: members with Special Skills around, for example, data and team dynamics. They are like oil for the machine, one step removed from your practice's most intimate dynamics, which means teams will usually behave more helpfully when they are around.

What do they do?

- They attend meetings and stay very Switzerland (meaning neutral, not providing great chocolate – though that is a welcome function, too)
- They focus more on process than on outcome: they are the *how* people
- They help structure and break down tasks and the stuff that needs to get done between meetings
- They help the Team Leader with his/her planning, and revising plans
- They teach, and where necessary offer practical support: data collection and analysis, and general methodology. They are like a data-loving Gandolf
- They offer technical expertise: when should I use a driver diagram, versus a fishbone chart? (Ooooh, the suspense!!)
- The slow the team down and remind them to look for causes before jumping to solutions

- They help with sticky problems within teams: reluctant members, control freaks (why do I swallow as I type that), dominating characters, passive aggressive behaviours ,etc.
- They prepare the team to look ninja slick when the team needs to present "upwards", ie to the CCG or on stage at the GP summit

Sponsors: your most senior leaders, the ones who have the team's back and support and review its work. An often overlooked role, but one that is crucial, especially when the mousse hits the fan.

What do they do?

- They energize teams: the believe in them, and focus them
- They mention the team, provide it with air time, visibly support it
- They make sure that the team's changes align with the direction of the practice: they would not, for example, encourage a team that wants to reduce reliance on computers, when the practice is trying to go digital by default

Coaches and team leader are usually best placed when they have **the magic trinity**:

o   People skills: they know how to build groups, provide feedback, and resolve conflict. You don't have to love them, but teams will struggle to work when led by someone who is not a people person

o   Technical skills: they've been to EQUIP Basics, and ideally to EQUIP in action. They know their basic data stuff; can organize a project, and ask good questions

o   Teaching skills: they can teach all of the above

So, to simplify your search, you're basically looking for kind and caring engineers, or

data/science friendly people persons.

Action for you: to check these roles back with your existing team(s): who is who? Do you all agree on who is holding which roles? Is anyone missing? Thinking through roles in this way can make for much sleeker, higher impact teams.

Kudos and props to all your existing teams: we are now managing over 140 tests of change, so jazz is happening... And the more we understand around how effective teams work, the more we can scale and spread the love. Happy working to us all, formidable movers and shakers, whatever role we might be playing within our Tower Hamlets teams.

Virginia